

Russia

In September, Russia held its largest military exercise since 1981, the height of the Cold War, deploying 300 000 troops and also inviting Chinese forces to participate. The event highlighted Russia's growing assertiveness in security and foreign policy, following its annexation of Crimea and military intervention in Syria. The policies of President Vladimir Putin, who was re-elected earlier this year, pose a dilemma for the European Union and the United States, with some observers accusing him of trying to sabotage Western liberal democracy and others saying that he wants to regain the position of global player that the Soviet Union once occupied.

This note offers links to **commentaries and studies by major international think tanks**, which discuss Russia's policies and how to respond to them. More reports on the topic can be found in a [previous edition](#) of 'What Think Tanks are Thinking', published in March 2018. Some more papers on US-Russian relations are available in [another edition](#) from the series published in August 2018.

Security and foreign policy

[Huge military drills show both the limits and the durability of China-Russia ties](#)

Rand Corporation, September 2018

[Putin is sneaking up on Europe from the south](#)

Council on Foreign Relations, September 2018

[Tensions en mer d'Azov](#)

Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur la Paix et la Sécurité, September 2018

[Russia and the Baltics: A testing ground for NATO–EU defence cooperation](#)

Istituto Affari Internazionali, September 2018

[Japan-Russia relations: The Kremlin has the upper hand](#)

Finnish Institute of International Affairs, September 2018

[Russia-Israel relationship transformed by Syria conflict](#)

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, September 2018

[Antagonisms in the EU's neighbourhood](#)

Bertelsmann Foundation, August 2018

[Retour de la Russie en RCA : Entre multiples intérêts et lutte d'influence](#)

Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur la Paix et la Sécurité, August 2018

[Status stalemate in the Caucasus](#)

Carnegie Europe, August 2018

[Did Russia really dump its U.S. debt?](#)

Council on Foreign Relations, August 2018

[Russia's Arctic illusions](#)

Brookings Institution, August 2018

[Walking a fine line on Russian sanctions](#)

Rand Corporation, August 2018

[China and Russia in global governance: Long-term obstacles to cooperation](#)

Finnish Institute of International Affairs, August 2018

[10 years after Bucharest: Why NATO should double-down on Georgian membership](#)

European Policy Studies, July 2018

[The US-Europe vs. Russia triangle](#)

Istituto Affari Internazionali, July 2018

[At Helsinki Summit, Trump and Putin become partners in destruction](#)

Chatham House, July 2018

[NATO needs a strategy for countering Russia in the Arctic and the Black Sea](#)

Chatham House, July 2018

[Trump's attitude toward NATO makes Putin's job easier](#)

Carnegie Europe, July 2018

[Re-establishing Reality in U.S.–Russia Relations after Helsinki](#)

German Marshall Fund, July 2018

[Russia's return to the Middle East: building sandcastles?](#)

European Union Institute for Strategic Studies, July 2018

[No end in sight in Eastern Ukraine](#)

Carnegie Europe, July 2018

[EU-Russia relations in the new Putin era](#)

International Centre for Defence and Security

[Prospects for 'Lisbon to Vladivostok': Limited by a double asymmetry of interests](#)

Centre for European Policy Studies, June 2018

[The US and the EU need a stronger dialogue on Russia sanctions](#)

European Policy Studies, June 2018

[Russia's role on North Korea: More important than you might think](#)

Council on Foreign Relations, June 2018

[Russia's new state armament programme: Implications for the Russian armed forces and military capabilities to 2027](#)

Chatham House, June 2018

[Rethinking the regional order for post-Soviet Europe and Eurasia](#)

Rand Corporation, June 2018

[Winning the normative war with Russia: An EU-Russia power audit](#)

European Council on Foreign Relations, May 2018

[Russia's active measures architecture: Task and purpose](#)

German Marshall Fund, June 2018

[Chechnya's status within the Russian Federation](#)

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, May 2018

[Who's afraid of Russian gas? Bridging the transatlantic divide](#)

Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 2018

[Regional security in northeast Asia and the Russia–Japan–U.S. triangle](#)

Russian International Affairs Council, May 2018

[Hybrid conflict: The roles of Russia, North Korea and China](#)

Clingendael, May 2018

[Russia's Afghan policy in the regional and Russia-West contexts](#)

Institut français des relations internationales, May 2018

[Do the Western Balkans face a coming Russian storm?](#)

European Council on Foreign Relations, May 2018

[Russia as restraining factor in the Iranian-Israeli confrontation in Syria](#)

Institute for National Security Studies, May 2018

[EU-Russia: Specific co-operations or global partnership?](#)

Institut Thomas More, April 2018

[From Chechnya to Syria: The evolution of Russia's counter-terrorist policy](#)

Institut français des relations internationales, April 2018

[The Russian challenge](#)

Rand Europe, April 2018

[A test of strength: The escalation of the crisis in Russian-American relations](#)

Centre for Eastern Studies, April 2018

[Germany's Russia policy shows no signs of softening](#)

Chatham House, April 2018

[Filling the void: Why the EU must step up support for Russian civil society](#)

Wilfried Martens Centre, April 2018

[Control of the Syrian airspace: Russian geopolitical ambitions and air threat assessment](#)

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, April 2018

[New sanctions on Russia are not enough](#)

Brookings Institution, March 2018

[The challenges of Putin's fourth \(and last?\) term](#)

Istituto Affari Internazionali, March 2018

[Towards Putin's last presidency?](#)

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[EU member states and Russia: National and European debates in an evolving international environment](#)

Finnish Institute of International Affairs, March 2018

[Putin and Russia's new nuclear weapons: Whoever dies with the most toys wins?](#)

Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2018

[Putinism: A praetorian system?](#)

Institut français des relations internationales, March 2018

[Does Europe have a Russia policy?](#)

Carnegie Europe, March 2018

[Anti-corruption et capitalisme de connivence en Russie](#)

La Vie des Idées, March 2018

[Contested space: Eastern Europe between Russia and the EU](#)

Centre for European Reform, March 2018

[The Russia file: Russia and the West in an unordered world](#)

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, Center for Transatlantic Relations, February 2018

[The real and hidden costs of Russia's foreign policy](#)

European Union Institute for Strategic Studies, February 2018

Putin's re-election

[Putin 4.0: 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'](#)

Finnish Institute of International Affairs, May 2018

[Putin after Putin](#)

Fundacion Real Instituto Elcano, April 2018

[No shock in Russian election: But can Europe surprise Putin?](#)

Centre for European Reform, March 2018

[Putin and Russia in 2018–24: What next?](#)

Chatham House, March 2018

[Russia's reform failures and Putin's future challenges](#)

Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche, March 2018

[The arrival of post-Putin Russia](#)

European Council on Foreign Relations, March 2018

Energy

[Nord Stream 2: Is Germany 'captive' to Russian energy?](#)

Council on Foreign Relations, August 2018

[Beyond Nord Stream 2: A look at Russia's Turk Stream project](#)

Bruegel, July 2018

[Should Germany dump Nord Stream 2? Can it?](#)

Carnegie Europe, June 2018

[Nord Stream 2: Rule no more, but still divide](#)

European Policy Centre, June 2018

[From vassalisation to emancipation: The model of Ukrainian-Russian gas co-operation has been revised](#)

Centre for Eastern Studies, March 2018

Cyber-security

[Trump's election meddling sanctions will not deter Russia](#)

Atlantic Council, September 2018

[Defining Russian election interference: An analysis of select 2014 to 2018 cyber enabled incidents](#)

Atlantic Council, September 2018

[How Ukraine's government has struggled to adapt to Russia's digital onslaught](#)

Council on Foreign Relations, August 2018

[Russia wants a deal with the United States on cyber issues: Why does Washington keep saying no?](#)

Council on Foreign Relations, August 2018

[Here's how Russia will try to interfere in the 2018 elections](#)

Rand Corporation, August 2018

[Russian election interference: Europe's counter to fake news and cyber attacks](#)

Carnegie Europe, May 2018

[Russian social media influence: Understanding Russian propaganda in Eastern Europe](#)

Rand Europe, April 2018

[Mapping the links between Russian influence and media capture in Black Sea countries](#)

Center for the Study of Democracy, April 2018

Domestic issues

[Pension reform in Russia: A test of the regime's resilience and citizens' patience](#)

Finnish Institute of International Affairs, September 2018

[Kremlin launches risky pension reform](#)

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, July 2018

[How Russian society created Putin](#)

German Marshall Fund, June 2018

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eprs@ep.europa.eu

<http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet)

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